hw planning

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening

Proposed Large-Scale Residential Development (LRD) at Water-rock, Midleton, Co. Cork

Client: Sean Walsh

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Introduction

1.1 Purpose of Statement

This Environmental Impact Assessment Screening has been prepared by HW Planning on behalf of Sean Walsh to determine whether an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) is required for a large-scale residential development at lands located at Water-rock, Midleton, Co. Cork. This statement should be read in conjunction with other application documents including the Statement of Consistency, Appropriate Assessment Screening/Natura Impact Statement, Landscape Design Report, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and Construction Environmental and Waste Management Plan (CEWMP).

The requirement for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) has its origins in Directive 85/337/EEC on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment. This Directive has been amended three times and was codified by Directive 2011/92/EU in 2011. Directive 2011/92/EU was then subsequently amended by Directive 2014/52/EU in 2014.

Projects requiring EIA are defined in Article 4 and set out in Annexes I and II of Directive 2014/52/EU. These provisions are in turn transposed into domestic Irish legislation through Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended.

In determining the requirement for EIA, Schedule 5 differentiates between different types of projects in the context of 'project types':

- Schedule 5 'Part 1' identifies project types which are anticipated to have significant effects on the environment, and which require mandatory EIA.
- Schedule 5 'Part 2' identifies projects which do not necessarily have significant effects but for which different thresholds or other criteria are applied, and if these are met, then EIA is required. In certain cases, projects which are identified in Part 2, but which fall below those thresholds and other criteria, may also require EIA. This is determined by the outcome of a sub-threshold EIA Screening which is undertaken in accordance with Schedule 7.

Having regard to the above, the first step in the EIA process is to undertake a screening exercise to determine whether or not EIA is required for a particular project. This report considers same relative to European best practice guidance on such matters.

Article 4(4) of the Directive 2014/52/EU introduces a new Annex IIA to be used in the case of screening determinations. Annex IIA of Directive 2014/52/EU requires that the following information be provided by a developer in respect of projects listed in Annex II:

> *"1. A description of the project, including in particular:*
>
> *a) a description of the physical characteristics of the whole project and, where relevant, of demolition works.*

b) a description of the location of the project, with particular regard to the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected.

2. A description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the project.

3. A description of any likely significant effects, to the extent of the information available on such effects, of the project on the environment resulting from:

a) the expected residues and emissions and the production of waste, where relevant.

b) the use of natural resources, in particular soil, land, water and biodiversity.

4. The criteria of Annex III shall be taken into account, where relevant, when compiling the information in accordance with points 1 to 3."

The above referenced Schedule 7 of the Regulations details the criteria the planning authority must consider in determining whether a sub-threshold EIA should be undertaken. This schedule is a direct transposition of Annex III of EU Directive 2011/92/EU. EU Directive 2014/52/EU provides a revised Annex III and its transposition into national legislation is mandatory. Accordingly, the pro-forma included in Section 4 of this report provides a screening statement of the proposed development against the Annex III criteria of 2014/52/EU.

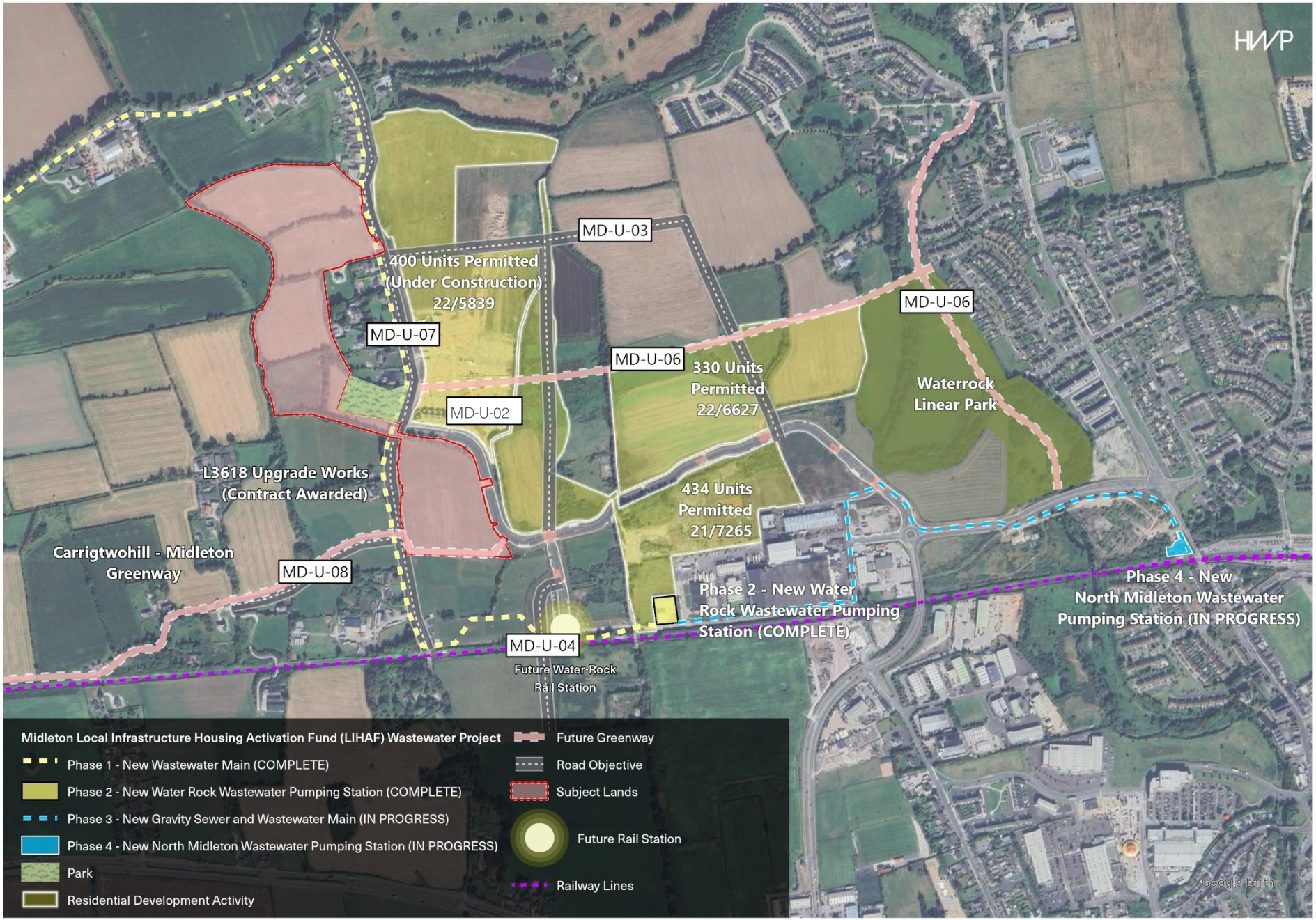


Figure 1-1 Site Context Map

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Project Details

2.1 Description & Characteristics of Proposed Development

A 10 year planning permission is sought at Water-Rock, Midleton, Co. Cork. The development will be delivered on a phased basis and consists of the construction of a residential development of 452 no. residential units with supporting resident amenity facilities, single-storey crèche, and all ancillary site development works.

The proposed development includes 219 no. two storey houses and 233 no. apartment / duplex units in 24 no. 3– part 5 storey blocks, providing 118 no. 4 bed units,143 no. 3 bed units, 89 no. 2 bed units, 74 no. 1 bed units and 28 no. studio units.

The proposal also makes provision for 2 no. communal rooms in Blocks C and E, outdoor amenity areas, landscaping, and ancillary infrastructure development works in the form of water and wastewater infrastructure, surface water attenuation, public lighting, surface car parking, bin stores, bicycle stores, plant and comms rooms, 6 no. ESB substations, and all associated site development works.

Vehicular access to the development will be via 3 no. entrances off Water-rock Road (L3618) and 1 no. entrance off the Water-Rock Urban Expansion Area Service Corridor Link Road (L3822-5). The proposal includes pedestrian and cycling paths, and makes provision for the delivery of part of the Carrigtwohill to Midleton Inter-Urban Cycleway to the south of Site A.

A Natura Impact Statement has been prepared in respect of the proposed development.

Housing Mix		
Unit Type	No.	%
Studio	28	6%
1-Bed	74	13%
2-Bed	89	20%
3-Bed	143	32%
4-Bed	118	26%
Total	**452**	**100%**

The architectural design strategy provides for more concentrated housing densities in Site parcel A to the south in closer proximity to the future Water-rock railway station, with the grain of the proposed development reducing northwards to reflect existing and permitted residential character and form. Provision is made for a single-storey creche, to accommodate 80 children, centrally located within the scheme to serve the overall development. Additionally, c. 14% of the total site area is proposed as public open space to serve future occupants.

Table 2-1: Biodiversity Net Gain Data extracted from EcIA prepared by APEM

Vegetation Removed (Net Loss)		**Unit**		**Total**
Trees		no.		19
Hedgerow / Tree Groups		m		488
Vegetation Retained (No Change)		**Unit**		**Total**
Hedgerow / Tree Groups		m		1,285
Mitigation Planting (Net Gain)		**Unit**	**Breakdown**	**Total**
Trees	Open Space	no.	306	783
	Street	no.	269	
	Orchard	no.	18	
	Garden	no.	238	
Tall Shrubs		no.	62	62
Hedgerow / Tree Groups	Native Hedgerow	m	1,071	1,710
	Pollinator Hedge	m	437	
	Native Enhancement Planting	m	202	

The approach to the site layout is landscape-led, informed by a detailed Tree Appraisal and Arboricultural Assessment, which has prioritised the protection and retention of high-quality trees and hedgerow on the site. A total of 19 trees and 488 metres of hedgerow are earmarked for removal, which will be offset by substantial compensatory planting comprising in excess of 800 new trees and tall shrubs, more than 1,000m of new hedgerow of native species and just under 500m of pollinator hedging.

The Water-Rock Framework Masterplan (2015) and the Water-rock Urban Design Framework (2020) have informed the design approach, with a linear parkway proposed along the western boundary of the scheme on the banks of the Glounamuck Stream. In addition, open spaces in the form of central greens and pocket parks are scattered throughout the sites, ensuring easy access to all future occupants.

The road network of the subject proposal has been designed to extend to the site boundaries, facilitating future connectivity and access between adjacent land parcels and thereby contributing to the realisation of further objectives such as MD-U-07, MD-U-02 and MD-U-03.

The construction method and sequencing of works is clearly described in Section 3.2 of the submitted Construction Environmental and Waste Management Plan (CEWMP).

2.2 Description of Location of Site

The two parcels are greenfield lands bisected by the Water-Rock Road[1] (L3618) local road. The Glounamuck Stream[2] flows along the western boundary of Parcel B. The lands are situated approximately 1.5 kilometres to the north-west of Midleton town centre, within the Water-Rock

[1] also known as Castle Rock Avenue (

[2] as named in OSI historical 25" mapping – it does not appear in EPA Mapping and is called the Castle Rock Stream by the GSI and Water Rock stream in the accompanying Flood Risk Assessment

Urban Expansion Area (UEA). With a population of 13,906 in the 2022 census, Midleton is the largest town in East Cork and it is identified as a 'Main Town' in the Cork County Development Plan 2022 (CDP). It has experienced strong recent growth, benefitting from its rail connections to Cork City and building on its industrial base and its tourism assets. It is earmarked for ambitious further growth with the Water-Rock Urban Expansion Area (UEA) identified as a priority growth area in Metropolitan Cork for large-scale sustainable housing delivery along the Cork-Midleton Eastern Rail Corridor. It is estimated it will deliver approximately 2,460 additional residential units. As demonstrated in the Figure 01, the planned new Water Rock Railway stop is located c. 165m to the south-east of Parcel A.

In 2024, there was active planning permission for over 1,400 units within the UEA[3]. These include:

- permission reference 22/5839 for 400 residential units granted to Ingram Homes Limited, located across the L3618 local road from the Parcel B. This development is currently under construction,
- permission reference 21/7265 granted to Dawn Meats Ireland for 434 residential units located to the east of Parcel A[4],
- permission reference 21/7264 granted to EMR Projects Ltd for a mixed-use development with 284 no. residential units located to the south of Parcel A,
- permission reference 22/6627 granted to Havenfalls Limited for the development of 330 no. residential units located to the east.

As evident from Figure 01, a number of enabling infrastructure projects, including wastewater infrastructure being delivered under the Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF) and future greenway and roads objectives are planned to service the developing area.

In this context Site A lands are zoned for 'Residential' use with the following specific development objectives in place:

Objective M-R-10

'Medium A Density residential development to include a mix of house types and the provision of a greenway (MD-U-06) to comprise a shared pedestrian/cycle pathway and primary ecological corridor. Part of the site is also adjacent to Feeder Street MD-U-07 Link Streets MD-U-02 and Link Street MD-U-03. The roads shall be constructed up to the boundaries of the site so that they can provide access to adjacent land parcels and developments. This site is divided between three separate landholdings which can be developed independently if necessary. However, there will be a requirement to provide connectivity and permeability through the sites for both cyclists and pedestrians. Development on this site requires provision to be made for the delivery of the infrastructure described in Tables 4.3.5 and 4.3.6.'

[3] Based on Cork County Development Plan 2 Year Review

[4] Permission was recently granted (ref. 25/6929) to Bluemont Developments (Midleton) Limited to omit 32 no. apartments from the scheme reducing the overall number of units to 402

Site B is zoned as Residential Additional Provision (RAP) lands provided to ensure sufficient provision of housing lands/sites recognising the need for a degree of choice in development sites. Objective MD-RAP-21 applies to these lands.

Objective MD-RAP-21

> *'Medium A Density residential development to include a mix of house types. The layout shall allow for permeability between housing areas for pedestrians and cyclists.*
>
> *Development on this site requires provision to be made for the delivery of the infrastructure described in Tables 4.3.5 and 4.3.6.*
>
> *The site supports a scrub/transitional woodland habitat. Where possible these habitats should be retained and incorporated into open space areas or boundaries of any new developments on site.'*

The CDP specific zoning objectives require the delivery of On-Site Infrastructure Bundle 'A' in order to enable development of the subject lands. The 'Key Projects' listed under On-Site Infrastructure Bundle 'A' are as follows:

- Services Corridor Link Road extension to rail stop and school site (Northern Relief Road to Water-Rock Road) and associated Surface Water Network
- Water-Rock Pumping Station and Rising Main
- IW Network Extension Drinking/Portable Water Supply
- Upgrade/Realignment of Water-Rock Road (L3618)

Figure 01 indicates the progress made to-date on each of the above 'Key Projects' since the publication of the CDP. The Water-rock services corridor link road has been completed and a tender was issued by Cork County Council in July 2024 for the L3618 upgrade project works which have now commenced, while construction is completed for the pumping station and rising main and Uisce Éireann network extension. As each of the key projects listed under On-Site Infrastructure Bundle 'A' has been progressed since the publication of the CDP, with a substantial portion of this bundle to be complete and delivered before the end of 2025, it is considered that the timing of the subject proposal is appropriate with regard to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

The Key Projects Under On-Site Infrastructure Bundle B includes the Linear Park Phase 1, pedestrian and cycle infrastructure, and Pocket Part 1 and 2. The applicant has been directly instrumental in the delivery of these infrastructure objectives and has ceded lands to the Council for the delivery of the MD-GR-11 pocket park outside the subject site boundary.

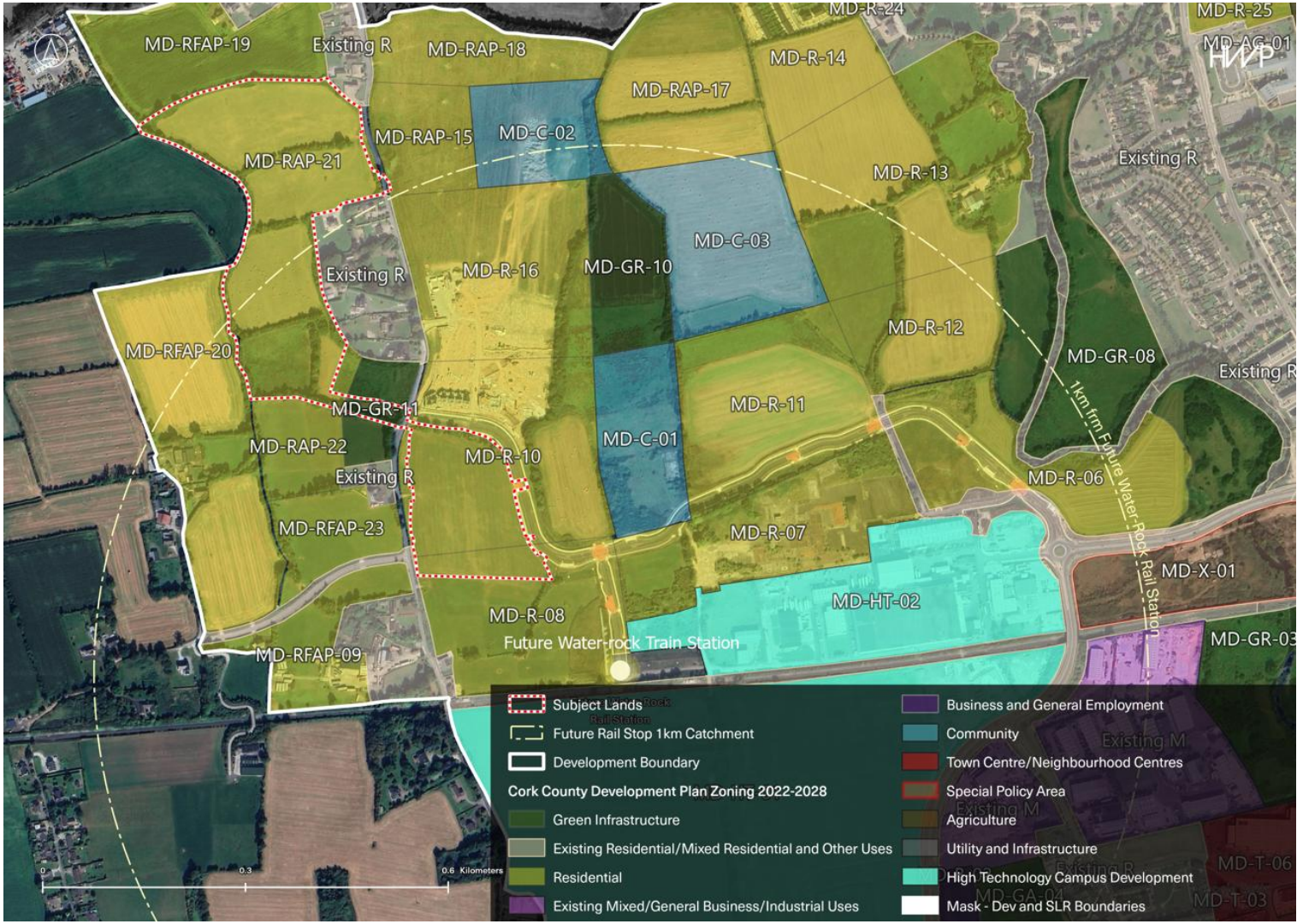


Figure 2-1 CDP Zoning Map

2.3 Environmental Sensitivities

2.3.1 Landscape

The subject lands are located within an area of 'High Value Landscape' as designated by the Cork County Development Plan (CDP) 2022 – 2028. As evident from Policy GI 14-10 – Draft Landscape Strategy (included below), this designation does not preclude development in what is identified in policy terms as an Urban Expansion Area.

However, higher development standards should apply in such areas.

> *'GI 14-10*
>
> *Ensure that the management of development throughout the County will have regard for the value of the landscape, its character, distinctiveness and sensitivity as recognised in the Cork County Draft Landscape Strategy and its recommendations, in order to minimize the visual and environmental impact of development, particularly in areas designated as High Value Landscapes where higher development standards (layout, design, landscaping, material used) will be required.'*

The application is supported by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) prepared by Cunnane Stratton Reynolds. The LVIA report describes the landscape context of the proposed development and assesses the likely landscape and visual impacts of the scheme on the receiving environment. It notes that the development takes a proactive approach to managing and integrating with green and blue infrastructure. The enclosed Tree Appraisal and Arboricultural Assessment has informed with proposed Landscape Plan, with all high-quality hedgerows being retained and forming part of a green framework across the site into which the proposed design integrates. The LVIA concludes that:

> *'Water-Rock is the subject of extensive planned change as provided for in Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028, incorporating key objectives for change as set out in the Water-Rock Urban Design Framework 2020. Mitigation measures in the form of tree and hedge planting will soften the visual effects of the new development and assist in its integration in the local environment as the vegetation matures in the medium to long term. Qualitatively the landscape effect is considered to be neutral.'*

2.3.2 Amenity

While the Water-rock UEA is predominantly a greenfield site, there are pockets of existing residential development along Castle Rock Avenue and as with any new development, there is the potential for overlooking and overshadowing arising from and within the proposed scheme. To address this potential issue a suite of technical reports in relation to the daylight and sunlight reception of the existing and proposed habitable rooms and amenity areas has been undertaken by DK Partnership. Based on this analysis, the design of the proposed development has been rigorously tested against a number of key assessments and the proposal will provide future occupants with high quality amenity while protecting that of existing residents in the area.

The potential for cumulative impacts on existing and future residents will be managed during the construction phase.

2.3.3 Biodiversity & European Sites

As detailed in the accompanying Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) by the APEM Group improved agricultural grassland is the predominant habitat within the subject lands, within which species diversity is sparse. An area of Wet Grassland was recorded in the southern parcel and areas of Scrub were identified to the north and east. The lands also include an area of immature woodlands in the centre of the site and recolonizing bare ground. Hedgerow and treeline form the principal boundaries around the lands and between the fields. These provide ecological connectivity to the surrounding hedgerow network and are considered as important at the local level. A stream running along the western boundary of parcel B. One medium-impact Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) was recorded on-site. An overview of the various Habitats within the site are illustrated in Figure 3 as shown. The enclosed Appropriate Assessment (AA) / Natura Impact Assessment (NIS)

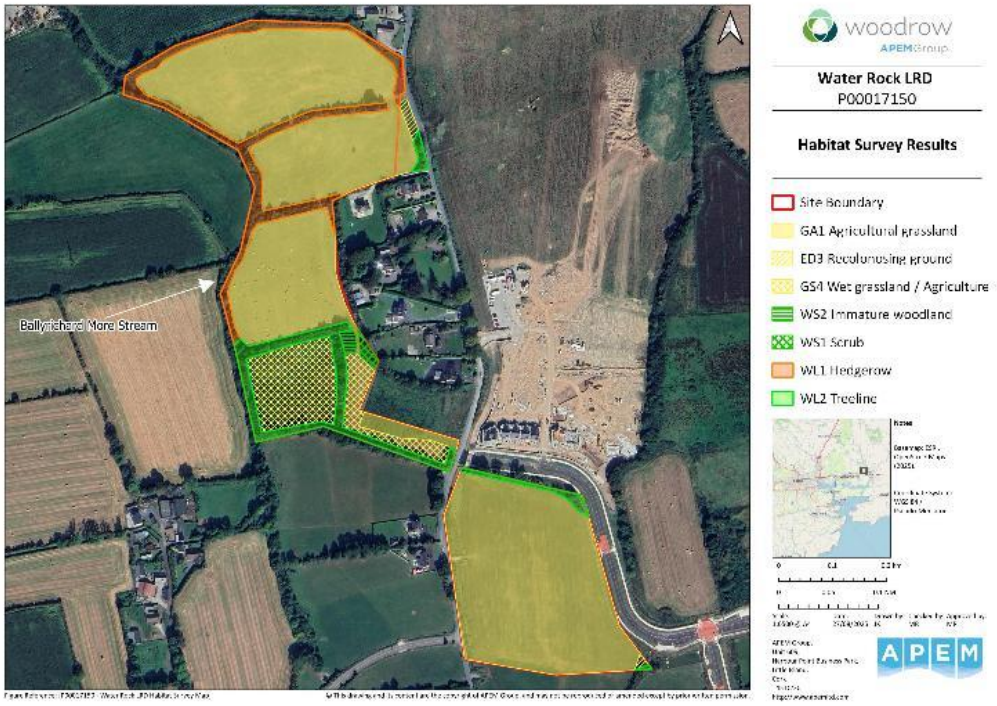


Figure 2-2: Site Habitats Map. Source EcIA prepared by APEM Group.

notes that no habitats listed as Qualifying Interests for the Great Island Channel Special Area of Conservation (SAC) are present within the subject site, and no wetland features exist that could support foraging or roosting by wading birds.

The proposed development will result in permanent loss of grassland lands, and minor loss of treelines and hedgerows. No effects on habitats outside of the subject lands are considered likely. Potential effects on species include disturbance to bats, otters, terrestrial mammals and loss of foraging and nesting habitat for bird species. Standard mitigation measures with proven effectiveness, based on recognised good practice, have been developed to reduce the effects of all identified impacts and effects. Where removal is required, significant compensatory planning is being proposed in line with the principle of net biodiversity gain. As noted in the EcIA appropriate measures will be implemented, in line with the Invasive Species Management Plan, to address invasive species on-site. The proposed development will not result in significant residual effects on biodiversity.

As detailed in the Appropriate Assessment (AA) prepared by APEM Group, all SPAs and SACs within 15km have been considered to assess their ecological pathways and functional links. The AA Screening considered that there is potentially an indirect link with the with the Great Island Channel SAC and Cork Harbour SPA from the Glounamuck Stream[5] possibly discharging into the Owenacurra Estuary, c.2.5km downstream. This could potentially provide a pathway for adverse water quality effects during the construction or operational phase of the proposed LRD. In addition, the AA Screening identified potential surface water runoff impacts, potential air quality impacts arising from increased traffic emissions and potential. Increased recreational pressure on Cork Harbour SPA was considered to have potential to disturb overwintering waterbirds and a potential for cumulative effects on the Owenacurra Estuary in particular was identified.

The Natura Statement further assessed these potential effects and that following an examination, analysis and evaluation of the relevant information, including the nature of the predicted impacts from the proposed development and all associated works, it concludes that provided the appropriate mitigation and guidance

> *'are fully and correctly implemented, and in view of best scientific knowledge and the conservation objectives of the Great Island Channel SAC and Cork Harbour SPA, it is concluded that the proposed LRD will not have any adverse effect on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects'.*



Figure 2-3: Site Proximity to designated Natura 2000 sites

[5] Called the Ballyrichard More Stream or unnamed stream in the NIS

2.3.4 Traffic Impact

The subject lands are accessed via 2 no. entrances off Water-Rock Road (Site B) and 1 no. entrance off the Water-Rock Urban Expansion Area Link Road (Site A). The proposal includes pedestrian and cycling paths, including part of the Carrigtwohill to Midleton Inter-Urban Cycleway to the south of Parcel A.

Possible operational stage impacts include the generation of higher levels of congestion and queuing at the site entrance and surrounding junctions. The proposed scheme has been designed to maximise the residential density in close proximity to the planned Water-rock train station and to optimise the pedestrian and cyclist connectivity with the station and the Midleton-Carrigtwohill Greenway. Both of these approaches seek to foster the uptake of sustainable travel modes. The potential for operational traffic to impact human health from increased traffic volumes and associated road safety implications are addressed in the accompanying Traffic and Transportation Assessment (TTA) prepared by EGIS Consulting Engineers.

The TTA assesses the potential future impacts of the subject development, in conjunction with the 4 no. nearby permitted developments (permission ref 21/7264 ,21/7265, 22/5839, 22/6627) on the seven junctions in the vicinity that are most likely to be affected by traffic associated with the proposed development.

- Junction 1 – Water Rock Road / Service Corridor Link Road;
- Junction 2 – Northern Relief Road / Service Corridor Link Road Roundabout;
- Junction 3 – Northern Relief Road / R626;
- Junction 4 – Northern Relief Road / Avoncore Cottages;
- Junction 5 – Northern Relief Road / Cork Road;
- Junction 6 – Ballintubber Road / N25 Slip Road Roundabout; and
- Junction 7 – Curragh / Water Rock Road.

The TTA considered 2025/26 as the Baseline Year, 2030 as the Half Operation Year, 2035 as the Opening Year and 2040 as the Design Year. As summarised in the conclusions of the TTA it considers that in a 'worst-case modelled scenario:

- Junction 1 was not open for public use at the time of the traffic count so a traffic capacity is not deemed to be required. In 2025 Baseline Year, all assessed junctions (except Junction 5) are operating within the normal design threshold in both the morning and evening peak hours. Junction 5, operates marginally within the normal design threshold in the evening peak hour, but it is operating over the normal design threshold in the morning peak hour.

  In 2030 Junction 1, Junction 2 and Junction 7 will operate within the normal design threshold in both the morning and evening peak hours for both the "without" development and "with" 50% development scenarios. In the 50% development scenario Junctions 3 and 4 will at different peak times slightly exceed normal design thresholds, however, will remain within the theoretical capacities. Junctions 5 and 6 are also modelled to exceed the normal design capacity by 2030, for both the "without" development and "with" 50% development scenarios, however, the proposed development is considered to have minimal impact.

- In 2035 Junction 1, Junction 2 and Junction 7 will operate within the normal design threshold in both the morning and evening peak hours for both the "without" development and "with" 100% development scenarios. Junctions 3 and 4 will continue at different peak times to slightly exceed normal design thresholds, however, will remain within the theoretical capacities. Junctions 5 and 6 are modelled to exceed the normal design capacity by 2030, for both the "without" development and "with" 100% development scenarios, however, the proposed development is considered to have minimal impact.

The evolving context of the area includes cycle network improvements planned along the Water-rock Road and delivered along the Water-Rock Urban Expansion Area Link Road, in addition to the planned Midleton-Carrigtwohill Inter-Urban Cycleway with pedestrian and cycle paths. It is envisaged these measures, in conjunction with BusConnects plans and the new train station, will result in a significant reduction in car traffic volumes and congestion at the modelled junctions. Furthermore, the TTA notes that Cork County Council will be undertaking separate infrastructural improvements in the intervening period to accommodate further development in the Water-rock UEA.

After completion of these improvements, the performance of these junctions should be further improved. The study concludes that traffic from the proposed development will not have a significant impact on existing and proposed traffic in the vicinity of the development.

Possible construction impacts are considered in both Section 5.7 of the TTA prepared by the EGIS Group and in Section 3 of the Construction, Environmental & Waste Management Plan (CEWMP) prepared by MMOS. The TTA and CEWMP note that the construction phase is expected to generate lower vehicle movements than the operational phase (ie 20 – 50 operatives travelling to site daily). However, these will comprise a greater number of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs), with it being estimated that there will be c. 20 HGV trips per day. The Construction Management Plan (ref. Section 3 of CEWMP) takes into account construction vehicle routing and timing to mitigate any issues with vehicles on public roads. This includes a number of mitigation measures to minimise any potential impacts. The development will be progressed in nine phases over a period of 10 years, with circa 50 units being constructed per year during that period to further manage the construction traffic. The CEWMP considers that the projected HGV generation is considered modest and will be managed through structured scheduling, dual-access routing, and active monitoring to ensure that impacts on the receiving road network remain temporary, controlled, and within acceptable capacity parameters. Section 6.6 of the TTA considers that given the above and that construction traffic will be outside of peak AM and PM hours, it will not cause a significant traffic impacts on the surrounding roads.

2.3.5 Flood Risk

A Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment prepared by Irish Hydrodata Limited accompanies this application which concludes that.

- The proposed residential development is appropriate for the site's flood zone category. Detailed site-specific flood mapping prepared for this study confirms that Parcel A is wholly within Flood Zone C and that so is the majority of Parcel B, except for a very localised section adjacent to the stream which is within Flood Zone A/B.
- The sequential approach outlined in Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines has been adhered to.

- All buildings and infrastructure are located in Flood Zone C.
- The proposed site passed the Justification Test in accordance with Box 5.1 of the Guidelines.
- Section 3.3 of the enclosed Civil Engineering Report prepared by MMOS Consulting Engineers proposes emphasis on recharge via SuDS measures, including tree pits, rain garden/downpipe planters and permeable paving where possible, rather than purely attenuating flow. The proposed scheme will not increase run-off rates when compared with the existing site and satisfies the requirement of the SSFRA to not increase potential flood risk.

2.3.6 Air

According to the Institute of Air Quality Management (IAQM) Guidelines, potential adverse effects from dust arising from construction to ecological receptors occurs within 50m of a construction site. As the closest European Sites, the Great Island Channel Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Cork Harbour Special Protection Area (SPA), are located c. 1.7km from the proposed development, it can be concluded that the proposal would not result in any significant impact on any designated site's air quality. With regard to any potential impacts on nearby residents, the submitted Construction and Environmental Management Plan provides a suite of mitigation measures which will ensure that the surrounding air quality is not impacted by the construction stage of the proposed development.

2.3.7 Archaeology

An Archaeological Impact Assessment prepared by John Cronin and Associates accompanies this application. A targeted programme of archaeological testing has been undertaken to verify the results of the geophysical survey carried out by Dr Ger Dowling in June 2025. A number of anomalies of archaeological potential were revealed, where were subject to testing. An archaeological site inspection was also undertaken during which nothing of an archaeological nature was noted. Furthermore, no recorded monuments are located on or in the immediate vicinity of the proposed development site. The nearest feature being a lime kiln (CO076-028), located within 500m of the boundary of the subject lands.

No significant archaeological features were found during the testing phase to inform the AIA. Three discrete areas of probable archaeological activity were identified within the proposed development lands during the testing programme. The discrete features likely comprise localised pit and stake hole activity. The AIA outlines proposed mitigation measures for the consideration of the County Archaeologist.

2.3.8 Water Quality

As outlined in the Ecological Impact Assessment and Natural impact Statement prepared by the APEM Group, a precautionary approach has been applied in respect of protection of water quality for both the construction and operational phases. The proposed construction compounds have been located away from water features and the management of the construction phase is informed by best practice safeguards to avoid runoff of silt.

The operational development is informed by a surface water management plan, underpinned by a drainage impact assessment.

Mitigation measures appropriate for a watercourse of good to high status are outlined in the NIS/EcIA. The scheme design has had regard to the conclusions of the EcIA/NIS and mitigation measures are proposed to ensure that the subject development will not impact upon the quality status of any surrounding waterbodies.

2.3.9 Soil

The Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) classes that the significant majority of the site has a 'Moderate' groundwater vulnerability rating, with areas of 'High to the south of Parcel A ands north of Parcel B. It comprises limestones, mudstone and sandstones till at the surface. There is a strip along the western boundary of Parcel B, aligned with the Glounamuck Stream where the vulnerability is classed as 'X – rock at or near surface.' The GSI state that *"Vulnerability is a term used to represent the intrinsic geological and hydrogeological characteristics that determine the ease with which groundwater may be contaminated by human activities."* The GSI further describes that the vulnerability of groundwater depends on:

- The time of travel of infiltrating water (and contaminants).
- The relative quantity of contaminants that can reach the groundwater; and
- The contaminant attenuation capacity of the geological materials through which the water and contaminants infiltrate

A Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment (SSFRA) and Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP) prepared by Irish Hydrodata and MMOS accompany this application. As detailed in the SWMP following site investigations, the sites SuDS water disposal strategies were developed and natural drainage features have been prioritised where possible. Attenuation volumes have been designed for the 1 in 100 year flooding event regardless of the proposed use of SuDS measures in order to ensure that drainage on site is robust and futureproofed.

2.3.10 Description of Aspects of the Environment Likely to be Affected

The most significant possible negative impacts on the environment, without appropriate mitigation measures in place, are likely to be:

- Construction traffic contributing to traffic congestion and road safety hazards on the local road network.
- Additional traffic on local road network once scheme is operational.
- Adverse health and amenity impacts arising from noise and air quality pollution during construction and operational phases.
- Disturbance and habitat loss of fauna;
- Possible residential amenity and visual impacts.
- Possible impacts include a risk of inadequacy or malfunction of the sewage system resulting in contamination, odour and potential human health impacts. A lack of capacity in the water or sewer network, could result in a lack of supply to residential units.
- Potential negative impacts on European designated sites.

These matters have been considered in full as part of the design and assessment of the subject proposal, with a range of positive measures produced in response, including:

- Provision of a detailed Landscape Design Strategy Tree Survey and Landscaping Proposals.
- Preparation of Verified Photomontages and a Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment.
- Preparation of Daylight Reception and Sunlight Reception Reports.
- Provision of an AA/NIS, Ecological Impact Assessment Report.
- Provision of a Traffic and Transport Assessment and DMURS Compliance Statement.
- Preparation of Construction Environmental and Waste Management Plan and a Preliminary Operational Waste Management Plan.
- Preparation of detailed SuDS and surface water drainage proposals (Section 3.3 and 3.4 of the enclosed Civil Engineering Report).

2.3.11 Expected Residues / Emissions / Production of Waste

It is expected that there will be some normal residues/emissions during the construction stage. Standard dust and noise prevention reduction measures as per the majority of planning applications of all scales will be employed and monitored. As such, pollution and nuisances are not considered likely to have the potential to cause significant impacts on the environment. Construction will be guided by a Construction Environmental and Waste Management Plan. There will be some waste produced in the construction of the proposed scheme, but this will be subject to normal controls. This will be disposed of using licensed waste disposal facilities and contractors. The scale of the waste production in conjunction with the use of licensed waste disposal facilities and contractors does not cause concern for likely significant impacts on the environment.

During the operational phase, everyday waste and recycling from residential dwellings will be disposed of by approved licensed waste disposal contractors. There are no significant mitigations measures or methods to be undertaken in order to reduce likely significant impacts on the environment in order to complete the proposed scheme. Any measures to manage noise, dust and/or pollution during the construction and operational phases are subject to standard policies and practices.

2.3.12 Use of Natural Resources – Soil / Land / Water / Biodiversity

There will be no significant likely impacts on the environment in relation to natural resources in the area. The main use of natural resources will be land. However, the land is a greenfield site in an urban context. The scale of natural resources used both in construction and operation is not such that would cause concern in terms of significant likely impacts on the environment. The development will not result in high demand for water use.

2.3.13 Cumulative Impacts

This screening assessment has also considered potential cumulative impacts that could arise from the proposed development in combination with other known projects in the area.

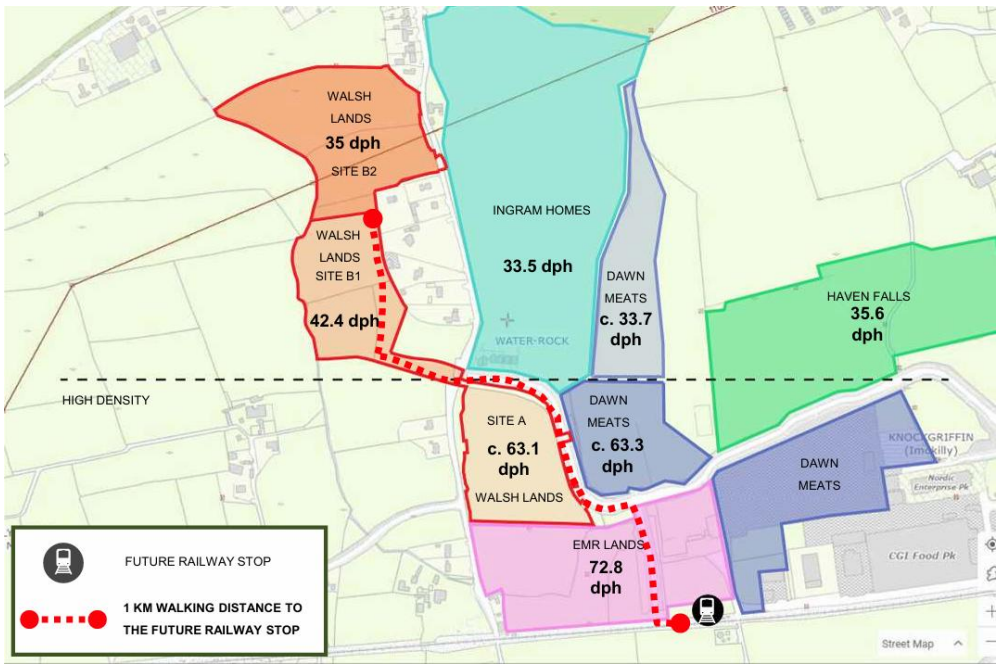


Figure 2-4: Other Permitted Developments in the Area

A desktop review of other local projects in the vicinity was undertaken using the Cork County Council and An Coimisiún Pleanála planning enquiry system[6].

Planning Ref:	Date Received	Applicant	Description	Current Status
21/7264	03/12/2021	EMR Projects Ltd	Permission for a mixed-use scheme comprising 284no. residential units, a Childcare Facility, a Retail unit, a Café unit, a Medical clinic, at Knockgriffin (Imokilly) and Water Rock, Midleton, Co. Cork.	Permission granted by Cork County Council on 27/01/2023
21/7265	03/12/2021	Dawn Meats Ireland	Permission for the demolition of existing derelict buildings, structures, outbuildings and hardstanding and the construction of a mixed-use scheme comprising 434no. residential units, a childcare facility, a Research and Development building, a Neighbourhood Centre, a 90-bed Nursing Home at Knockgriffin (Imokilly), Knockgriffin (Barrymore) and Water Rock, Midleton, Co. Cork.	Permission granted by Cork County Council on 16/06/2023.
22/5839	04/08/2022	Ingram Homes Limited	Ten-year planning permission for LRD of 400 residential units to be constructed in a series of phases, a creche and community use unit and ancillary infrastructure, services, and site development works at Water-Rock, Midleton, Co. Cork.	Permission granted by Cork County Council on 28/05/2023

[6] As at February 2026

22/6627	25/11/2022	Havenfalls Limited.	Ten-year planning permission for LRD comprising the construction of 330 no. residential units at Knockgriffin, Midleton, Co.Cork.	Permission granted by Cork County Council on 25/0/4/24
24/6239		Ingram Homes Limited	Amendments to 8 no dwellings permitted under 22/5839.	Permission granted by Cork County Council on 22/01/25
25/5563	01/08/2025	Ingram Homes Limited	Amendments to 12 no dwellings permitted under 22/5839.	Permission granted by Cork County Council on 24/02/2026
25/6929	22/12/2025	Bluemont Developments (Midleton) Limited	Amendments to part of the development previously permitted under planning reference 21/7265.	Permission granted by Cork County Council on 25/09/2025

Table 02 - Recent Significant Permitted Development in the Vicinity of the Subject Lands

The full potential for the project to be constructed alongside others in the local area remains an unknown at present. As indicated in Tabe 02 a number of large-scale construction projects have been permitted in the vicinity of the site in 2021 and 2025. The permission in the immediate vicinity (22/5839), on the Ingram Homes site is being implemented. That development is being constructed on a phased basis. The permitted development under 22/6627 (Haven Falls) is also under construction and 21/7265 (Dawn meats) has commenced site clearance/ preparatory works.

The CEWMP sets out that any overlap related to project construction in the immediate vicinity of the site will be proactively managed via the procedures set out in the standard co-ordination and mitigation procedures set out in the CEWMP and via focused engagement with Cork County Council. The construction life cycles of permitted adjacent projects is reviewed in the CEWMP based on construction status and anticipated completion periods. Construction activities are also profiled.

In recognition of the overlap in construction periods, section 3.3.2 of the CEWMP sets out a series of protocols in relation to the management of potential impacts on nearby developments that are already occupied/operations. This includes measures regarding the:

- Protection of residential amenity,
- Peak hour sensitivity,
- Communication protocols.

Section 3.3.3 and 3.3.4 of the CWMP considers where adjoining sites are simultaneously under construction, and sets out the following coordination measures to be implemented:

- Contractor co-ordination,
- Temporary Traffic Management Alignment,

It notes that a Construction Logistics Manager will monitor commencement notices in relation to permitted but as yet not commenced development in the area, with the view to arranging the following:

- Early engagement will be sought with adjoining developers upon confirmation of start dates.
- Where feasible, earthworks and infrastructure-intensive phases will be programmed to avoid overlap.

With these proposed co-ordination and management measures in place it is considered that any potential cumulative impact will not be significant on the local road network and neighbourhood.

03 //

Assessment of EIA Requirement

3.1 Schedule 5 Criteria

Article 93 and Schedule 5 of the 2001 Planning and Development Regulations sets out the classes of development for which a planning application must be accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR). Part 1 and Part 2 Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 defines the categories and thresholds of developments requiring EIA. The subject proposal does not come under any of the stipulated categories contained in Part 1.

The proposed development for a residential scheme and ancillary works falls within the category of an 'Infrastructure Project' under Schedule 5 (10) (b) of the Planning and Development Regulations, which provides that a mandatory EIAR must be carried out for the following projects:

> *"b)*
>
> *(i) Construction of more than 500 dwellings*
>
> *(ii) Construction of a car-park providing more than 400 spaces, other than a car-park provided as part of, and incidental to the primary purpose of, a development.*
>
> *(iii) Construction of a shopping centre with a gross floor space exceeding 10,000 square metres.*
>
> *(iv) Urban development which would involve an area greater than 2 hectares in the case of a business district, 10 hectares in the case of other parts of a built-up area and 20 hectares elsewhere.*
>
> *(In this paragraph, "business district" means a district within a city or town in which the predominant land use is retail or commercial use.)"*

The proposed development does not trigger a requirement for mandatory EIA because:

- At 452 the number of individual residential units falls below the threshold of 500 dwellings.
- At 12.2 ha (developable area of 10.2 ha), the site area is below the threshold of 20 hectares that would trigger a mandatory EIA outside of a built-up area, such as Water-rock. Cork County Council have previously established that this threshold applies at the subject location having regard to precedent under reference 22/05839 and 22/6627. This view was supported by the Council in the LRD Opinion issued on the 19th of December 2025.

04 //

Schedule 7 Screening

4.1 Schedule 7 Criteria

Schedule 7 of the Regulations details the criteria the planning authority must consider in determining whether a sub-threshold EIA should be undertaken. This schedule is a direct transposition of Annex III of EU Directive 2011/92/EU. EU Directive 2014/52/EU provides a revised Annex III and its transposition into national legislation is mandatory. Accordingly, a screening statement of the proposed development against the Annex III criteria of 2014/52/EU is enclosed in Appendix A.

Based on the information provided in accordance with Annex IIA and Annex III of the 2014 Directive, it is considered that a sub-threshold EIA is not required for the proposed development, as adequate measures are in place to avoid, reduce or mitigate likely impacts, such that neither the construction nor operational phase of the overall development will have a significant negative impact on the environment.

4.2 Construction Phase

Criteria for assessment of EIA sub-threshold	Impacts during Construction Phase
1. Characteristics of proposed development The characteristics of the proposed development, in particular	
- The size of the proposed development	The site area is 12.2 ha (developable area of 10.2 ha) on an existing green-field site. It is proposed that the development will be constructed on a phased basis, as set out in the submitted Construction Environmental and Waste Management Plan (CEWMP). It is proposed that a relatively modest number of units (c. 50) will be constructed annually over the duration of the 10 year permission. The construction works themselves will be confined to small focused sub-sections of the overall site, as outlined in the submitted construction phasing plan. No significant impact likely

- the cumulation with other proposed development	The potential for the project to be constructed alongside others in the local area remains an unknown at present. A number of large-scale construction projects have been permitted in the vicinity of the site in 2021 and 2025 (ref Table 02). Some of these are under construction, with potential for others to commence. The potential for construction phase interactions with these other projects has been considered in detail as part of the prepared CEWMP in recognition that they may utilise the same construction access routes. It is intended to also deliver the proposed development on a phased basis over 9 phases. In addition, a dual-access routing strategy is being adopted, alongside structured scheduling and active monitoring to minimise any potential cumulative impacts. Section 3.3.3 and 3.3.4 or the CEWMP set out a series of co-ordination measures that will be implemented so that the potential interactions between these projects will be managed to ensure there are no significant cumulative impacts. The planned phased construction of the proposed development at c.50 units per annum means there will be a reduced number of construction personnel on the site at any time; that the number of HGV deliveries will be reduced commensurate with the phased scale of development; and the spatial extent of the works area for any specified phase will be a small sub-set of the larger overall site area. In the event that the construction phases of other additional projects coincide, potential for cumulative impacts will continue to be monitored and considered in full as part of the final pre-commencement CEWMP and the potential for such impacts will be mitigated accordingly as part of focused response measures which will inform the construction works schedule. Best practice standards, protocols and mitigation measures will be adhered to during the construction phase in order to avoid potential

	cumulative impacts and likely significant effects are not anticipated. **No significant impact likely.**
the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity	Energy, including electricity and fuels, will be required during the construction phase. Rock and soil resources will also be excavated. Construction will use various raw materials typical of the construction of residential estate developments. No out of the ordinary use of natural resources is likely during the construction process. **No significant impact likely.**
- the production of waste	Waste will be generated during the construction phase and these will be typical of development of this nature. The CEWMP includes provisions for handling waste in full accordance with statutory legislation and associated guidance. **No significant impact likely.**
- pollution and nuisances	Development of site will increase traffic in the area for the duration of the construction phase. Temporary noise, dust and vibration impacts will be managed in accordance with the specified controls / standards set out in the CEWMP. The document includes contractor enforced commitments including clear responsibility for environmental monitoring and management, and liaison to address any nuisance complaints. Section 3.3.3 and 3.3.4 or the CEWMP set out a series of co-ordination measures that will be implemented to so that the potential interactions between these projects will be managed to ensure there are no significant cumulative impacts in terms of pollution and nuisance. **No significant impact likely.**
- the risk of major accidents and/or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned, including those caused by	No negative impacts are foreseen, subject to strict compliance with standard environmental controls. **No significant impact likely.**

climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge	
- the risk to human health (for example due to water contamination or air pollution)	The CEWMP includes safeguards to ensure there will be no impacts on human health. Construction noise will comply with the requirements of BS5228-1:2009: Code of Practice for Noise and Vibration Control on Construction and Open sites. Noise during construction shall not exceed 65dB (A), Leq 30 minutes, and the peak noise shall not exceed 75 dB (A) when measured at any point off site. Dust control will adhere to "Control of Dust from Construction and Demolition Activities" – (BRE/DTI, 2003). The dust limit will be set as 350mg/$m2$/day as outlined in the TA Luft Guidelines. CIRIA guidelines will be implemented in respect of works area setbacks to watercourses, management of rainwaters etc to ensure no siltation. On completion of works, noise and dust levels will return to background levels. **No significant impact likely.**
2. Location of proposed development The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by proposed development, having regard to:	
- the existing land use	The surrounding area is characterised by existing agricultural lands, with pockets of residential development. However, the subject lands are zoned residential and the proposed development is therefore consistent with the land use objective. **No significant impact likely.**
- the relative abundance, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources in the area	The site is not located within or in the immediate vicinity of any statutory designated area. An EcIA and AA/NIS has been prepared to actively consider the potential for impacts on ecology and Natura 2000 sites. The construction phase will include some focused removal of trees and hedgerows, which has been shaped by arboricultural and ecological survey. Removal will

	be offset by substantial compensatory planting at a multiple of that being removed supporting the natural environment alongside **No significant impact likely.**
- the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying attention to the following areas: (a) wetlands, (b) coastal zones, (c) mountain and forest areas, (d) nature reserves and parks, (e) areas classified or protected under legislation, including special protection areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC, (f) areas in which the environmental quality standards laid down in legislation of the EU have already been exceeded, (g) densely populated areas, (h) landscapes of historical, cultural or archaeological significance	As detailed in the AA/NIS all SPAs and SACs within 15km have been considered to assess their ecological pathways and functional links. Two European sites are located within 15km of the Site specifically the Great Island Channel SAC and Cork Harbour SPA . A possible hydrological connection was identified between the Great Island Channel SAC and Cork Harbour SPA and the subject lands, via the via the stream that runs along the western boundary of Site B, possibly discharging into the Owenacurra Estuary. Therefore, this was taken forward for further detailed consideration. The NIS concludes that following an examination, analysis and evaluation of the relevant information, including the nature of the predicted impacts from the proposed development and all associated works, it has been objectively concluded that with the implementation of the proposed mitigation measures, the proposed development will not, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, adversely affect the integrity or conservation status of any of the qualifying interests of the Great Island Channel SAC and Cork Harbour SPA or any other European site in light of best scientific knowledge. An Archaeological Impact Assessment prepared by John Cronin and Associates accompanies this application. The Planning Authority will note that a targeted programme of archaeological testing has been undertaken to verify the results of the geophysical survey. The findings of this work have informed the project design and will be had regard to in respect to implementation during the construction phase. Best practice standards, environmental guidelines and mitigation measures will be adhered to during the construction phase in order to avoid potential

	impacts on natural resources and likely significant effects are not anticipated. **No significant impact likely.**
3. Characteristics of potential impacts The potential significant effects of proposed development in relation to criteria set out under paragraphs 1 and 2 above, and having regard in	
- the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	The spatial extent of potential construction works impacts will be local to the area. The area is not heavily populated at present, but that may change in the future. The proposed phasing of construction works (c.50 units per annum) means the construction works will be confined to smaller geographical areas at any one stage. The CEWMP includes a construction and traffic management plan which will be put in place to mitigate any potential negative impacts on traffic flows locally. **No significant impact likely.**
- the nature of the impact	Potential for the human environment to be impacted negatively during the construction phase by way of traffic disruption, noise and dust issues etc. Any impacts will be localised and temporary in nature and are not deemed to be significant. These will be proactively managed via standard environmental protection measures specified in the CEWMP. **No significant impact likely.**
- the transboundary nature of the impact	No significant effects arising from construction of the development.
- the intensity and complexity of the impact	The construction methods for the proposed development as described in the CEWMP are not complex. The intensity of the construction phase is in keeping with modern construction projects. **No significant impact likely.**

- the probability of the impact	Some level of construction impacts is highly probable, but these will be mitigated by standard best practice techniques identified in the CEWMP No significant impact likely.
- the expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact.	The construction phase of the development is expected to commence within approximately 6 months of any grant of permission. Given the planned phased approach any impacts will be modest in scale of medium-term duration and restricted by planning conditions in terms of the hours of operation. No permanent negative impacts are anticipated as a result of the construction phase of the project. No significant impact likely.
- cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved projects.	A desktop review of Cork County Council and An Coimisiún Pleanála's planning enquiry systems identified recent grants of permission in the wider area of a similar scale as to potentially result in a cumulative impact. In the unlikely event that the construction phases of these projects coincide, potential for cumulative impacts will continue to be monitored and considered in full as part of the final pre-commencement Construction and Environmental Management Plan and the potential for such impacts will be mitigated accordingly as part of focused response measures. No significant impact likely.
- The possibility of effectively reducing the impact	There is a strong possibility of reducing potential impacts arising from the construction phase through appropriate project management and the application of identified best practice construction and environmental protection methods. No significant impact likely.

4.3 Operational Phase

Criteria for assessment of EIA sub-threshold	Impacts during Operational Phase

1. Characteristics of proposed development

The characteristics of the proposed development, in particular

- The size of the proposed development	The subject lands are 12.2 ha, with a developable area of 10.2 ha. The development will change the use of the land from agriculture to residential which is consistent with the zoning of the site. The developed design has been tested relative to key policy and guidelines, as well as landscape and visual considerations. Collectively, the size and design of the project will deliver positive benefits relative to the 'do-nothing' scenario. No significant impact likely.
- the cumulation with other proposed development	The proposed uses are consistent with the land use zoning of the site and compatible with adjacent land-uses, as enshrined in adopted planning policy. The development will positively integrate with other plans and projects once operational. No significant impact likely.
- the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity	Water, consumption of electricity, energy related to the proposed residential and creche uses. No out of the ordinary use of natural resources is likely during the operational phase. No significant impact likely.
- the production of waste	An Operational Waste Management Plan accompanies this application. Measures will be put in place to avoid and/or mitigate pollution from operational waste. With mitigation measures in place no significant negative impacts are likely. Domestic and commercial waste (creche) will be generated from the development, the disposal of which will be informed by a waste/refuse management strategy for the site. Related practices are unlikely to cause unusual, significant or adverse effects. No significant impact likely.

- pollution and nuisances	The site is currently in agricultural use and only generates agricultural related vehicular movements. The proposal will give rise to some traffic and visitor numbers to/from site. Suitable provision has made for pedestrian and cycle infrastructure to offset vehicular trips, while proximity to the future rail station means the site will contribute positively to modal shift and sustainable travel. The enclosed Operational Waste Management Plan includes measures to avoid and / or mitigate pollution from operational waste. Surface water management proposals for the site have been designed in accordance with best practice measures. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) techniques have been incorporated into the design of the scheme, where possible, to prevent the potential for contaminated storm water run-off to arise from the proposed development. Approaches that will be utilised within the scheme include tree pits, rain garden/downpipe planters and permeable paving where possible, rather than purely attenuating flow. **No significant impact likely.**
- the risk of major accidents and/or disasters which are relevant to the project concerned, including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge	None foreseen, subject to strict compliance with standard environmental controls. **No significant impact likely.**
- the risk to human health (for example due to water contamination or air pollution)	None. The development will not involve the use, storage, transport, handling or production of substances or materials which could be harmful to people and the environment. it is considered that this proposal has the potential to have a long-term beneficial impact on human health as a consequence of facilitating sustainable urban development incorporating communal and private open space areas on lands zoned for residential development. **No significant impact likely.**

2. Location of proposed development

The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by proposed development, having regard to:

- the existing land use	The site is currently in agricultural use, however, the proposed use is compatible with the site zoning as outlined in the Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028. The proposal will develop an important site in a designated Urban Expansion Area bringing it into active residential use consistent with envisaged land-use. No significant impact likely.
- the relative abundance, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources in the area	The proposed operational phase will not have any out of the ordinary impact on natural resources. The design includes focused landscaping, including native tree and hedgerow planting which will support operational development and make the adjoining watercourse to the west of Parcel B a quality and integrated natural amenity feature. The proposed development accords with the principle of biodiversity net gain. No significant impact likely.
- the absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying attention to the following areas: - wetlands, - coastal zones, - mountain and forest areas, - nature reserves and parks, - areas classified or protected under legislation, including special protection areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC,	Proposed use is compatible with the geographical area and zoning, as well as other policy intentions for the area. The provision of a linear amenity park along the western boundary of Parcel B, a number of large central greens and pocket parks, alongside the retention of existing high-quality hedgerows and the development of new green areas and other landscaping treatments will all support the assimilation of the development in its local context and contribute towards an attractive environment. There are no recorded national monuments within the subject site. The proposed development within the Water-rock Urban Expansion Area will deliver infrastructure

- areas in which the environmental quality standards laid down in legislation of the EU have already been exceeded, - densely populated areas, - landscapes of historical, cultural or archaeological significance	commensurate with housing delivery targets as envisaged in policy. The subject site is within an area designated as Indented Estuarine Coast and is part of an area designated as high landscape value. The enclosed Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal prepared by Cunnane Stratton Reynolds notes that the resulting visual effects will generally be in line with expectations for deliver new housing on zoned greenfield sites. This change is provided for in Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028, incorporating key objectives set out in the Water-Rock Urban Design Framework 2020. It notes that in addition to retention of existing trees and hedgerows where possible, remedial mitigation measures are proposed in the form of compensatory planting throughout the site which will soften and integrate the proposed development. Given these mitigation measures, it concludes that the subject site has the capacity to accommodate the proposed development at the edge of town location. The proposal includes pedestrian and cycle links to sustainably connect the site to existing centres of population, as well as other future development areas. Part of the proposed Carrigtwohill to Midleton Inter-Urban Cycleway will be delivered in Parcel A. The submitted AA/NIS has assessed potential for connectivity to any designated European sites and has concluded that specific mitigation measures are not necessary in order to protect such as significant effects are unlikely to arise as a result of the development. No significant impact likely.

3. Characteristics of potential impacts

The potential significant effects of proposed development in relation to criteria set out under paragraphs 1 and 2 above, and having regard in:

- the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	The subject site is approximately 12.2 hectares, with a developable area of 10.2ha hectares in area, and is sub-threshold for the purposes of EIA [Schedule 5, Part 2, Section 10 (b)(iv) of 2001 Planning and Development Regulations]. This green-field

	development in within the Water-Rock UEA will be compatible with the future urban context of the area and consistent with zoning objectives. Photomontages have been prepared for the proposal. They confirm that the development will not give rise to any adverse effects of major significance from the selected viewpoint locations, rather it will enhance and contribute positively to urban character. **No significant impact likely.**
- the nature of the impact	Expected benefits to physical, micro and macro environments fostering the envisaged growth of Midleton, a Metropolitan Main Town within the wider county of Cork. The effects will be positive in nature. **No significant impact likely.**
- the transboundary nature of the impact	No transboundary impacts are expected. **No significant impact likely.**
- the intensity and complexity of the impact	The operational phase of the development is moderate and will be actively managed. **No significant impact likely.**
- the probability of the impact	The operational phase will inevitably change the local environment. Measures are in place to avoid, reduce, or mitigate any likely negative impacts. **No significant impact likely.**
- the expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact.	Once constructed, the proposal will be permanent and non-reversible. **No significant impact likely.**
- cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved projects.	The development of the subject site is supported by adopted plans and policy objectives which have been subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment. The environmental effect of the proposed development has already been adjudicated on and it has been determined that the types of intended development would be appropriate relative to the subject site and adjacent areas. It is

	anticipated that the subject proposal will provide for important synergistic and cumulative benefits in the wider area. No significant impact likely.
- The possibility of effectively reducing the impact	The proposal is being shaped by a number of proactive design measures to reduce the potential for any negative impacts. This includes the promotion of sustainable travel patterns and the promotion of SuDS within the drainage strategy for the site. It has been objectively concluded that the proposal will provide for long-term beneficial effects of varying degrees. No significant impact likely.

05 //

Conclusion

5.1 Summary

Part 1 and Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 defines the categories and thresholds of development that require EIA. The proposed residential development and employment scheme and ancillary works fall within the category of an 'Infrastructure Project' under Schedule 5 (10)(b) of the Planning and Development Regulations, which provides that a mandatory EIAR must be carried out for the following projects:

> *"b)*
>
> *(i) Construction of more than 500 dwellings*
>
> *(ii) Construction of a car-park providing more than 400 spaces, other than a car-park provided as part of, and incidental to the primary purpose of, a development.*
>
> *(iii) Construction of a shopping centre with a gross floor space exceeding 10,000 square metres.*
>
> *(iv) Urban development which would involve an area greater than 2 hectares in the case of a business district, 10 hectares in the case of other parts of a built-up area and 20 hectares elsewhere (In this paragraph, "business district" means a district).*

The proposed development does not trigger a requirement for mandatory EIA because:

- At 452 the number of individual residential units falls below the threshold of 500 dwellings.
- At 12.2 ha (developable area of 10.2 ha), the site area is below the threshold of 20 hectares that would trigger a mandatory EIA outside of a built-up area, such as Water-rock. Cork County Council have previously established that this threshold applies at the subject location having regard to precedent under reference 22/05839 and 22/6627. This view was supported in the LRD Opinion issued by the Council on the 19th December 2025.

Based on the information provided in accordance with Annex IIA and Annex III of the 2014 Directive, it is considered that a sub-threshold EIA is not required for the proposed development, as adequate measures are in place to avoid, reduce or mitigate likely impacts, such that neither the construction nor operational phases of the overall development will have a significant negative impact on the environment. The application is accompanied by focused technical reports across various disciplines which confirm no significant environmental impacts, findings which are reflected in this EIA Screening.



HW Planning
5 Joyce House,
Barrack Square,
Ballincollig,
Cork
P31 KP84

www.hwplanning.ie
info@hwplanning.ie +353
(0)21 487 3250

Directors:
Harold Walsh
Conor Frehill

Company Reg. No. 486211

Accreditations
ISO 9001:2015
ISO 14001:2015
ISO 45001:2018